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Common Core Results in Increased Academic Performance

Wisconsin Common Core Testimony about Increased Academic Performance

Pam Yoder, District Administrator, School District of Belleville:

- I would like to share with you what the impact of the Common Core Standards have on student achievement... Student work changes in order to address the Common Core. In the case of mathematics, the activities and math problems have to provide opportunities for students to show their work, supply reasoning for why different strategies are plausible, and illustrate multiple representations in the answers. In the case of language arts, prompts for questioning in reading will need to shift away from surface comprehension of text that are merely jumping off points for students to talk about their own personal response to the text. Instead, students will need to interrogate the text to understand the insights or points that are explicit or inferred in the text, understand how the language, vocabulary, and syntax of the text contribute to the main ideas of the text, and analyze their validity.

<http://commoncore.dpi.wi.gov/files/commoncore/pdf/belleville-schl-dist-testimony.pdf>.

Richard Appel, Middle School Principal, Chilton Public Schools:

- Students are challenged more than ever before as they critically think and problem solve in order to develop the answer that best meets the question. I have never seen the level of team work and higher order thinking skills used as they tackle relevant real word problems.

<http://standards.dpi.wi.gov/files/commoncore/pdf/chilton-sch-dist-testimony.pdf>.

James R. Sebert, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools, Fond du Lac School District:

- Our staff has done an incredible job with these rigorous standards by making them meaningful and relevant for kids. We are seeing the confidence level in our teachers and our students rise. Kids can perform at higher levels if we set the expectations there and provide the proper, scaffolded support. We are doing that in Fond du Lac and seeing the results.

<http://standards.dpi.wi.gov/files/commoncore/pdf/fond-du-lac-testimony.pdf>.

Mary Bowen-Eggebraaten, Superintendent, Hudson School District:

- As our teachers have delved into the CCSS, they are seeing students engaged in higher levels of thinking and more rigorous discussions of text. Students are demonstrating improved writing skills that demonstrate deeper levels of thought than have been evident in previous years.

<http://commoncore.dpi.wi.gov/files/commoncore/pdf/hudson-schl-dist-testimony.pdf>.

Patricia Greco, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools, School District of Menomonee Falls

- Our student performance has never been higher as a school district. We have clarified what the standards mean for our student performance. We have invested thousands of hours of employee time and local dollars to frame the alignment to the standards for college and career readiness within the common core. We have already invested in full alignment to Plan, Explore and the ACT.

<http://commoncore.dpi.wi.gov/files/commoncore/pdf/menomonee-falls-schl-dist-testimony.pdf>.

Dave Polashek, Superintendent, Oconto Falls School District:

- As teachers applied what they learned in that professional development, students began to read more informational text. They were reading and writing informational text using argument. While doing so, they cited evidence for their argument. Students were reading and being held accountable for reading text at higher lexiles. We have revised daily schedules and increased the ELA block to accommodate the time needed for the increased rigor of the reading and writing.
- Turning to the math standards, teachers analyzed the standards and found that the level of rigor needed to master the standards was not possible with the current math program. As a result, changes were made. Students now work in cooperative groups to solve relevant problems and gain understanding of the “math” behind the math. Students are held accountable for their understanding by explaining how they solved the problems. Students now can write about math and how the problems solved. Communication is a regular part of today’s math curriculum.
- In our schools, students are appropriately using math concepts at earlier grade levels than was the case prior to our adoption of the Common Cores. Teachers at all levels in ELA and Math are co-planning lessons and sharing materials. Teachers have much more of a sense that “We are in this together.” Students have a heightened awareness of their own accountability for their achievement. To help facilitate higher achievement levels in math, we have increased math learning time at the elementary and middle schools.

<http://commoncore.dpi.wi.gov/files/commoncore/pdf/oconto-falls-schl-dist-testimony.pdf>.

Jane Maki, Director of Curriculum and Instruction, School District of Osceola:

- Three years ago the Osceola Schools made the local decision to align our curriculum improvement efforts around the best practices of the day. We strongly believed that the implementation of the Common Core State Standards in isolation from our other initiatives would show minimal effects. A tremendous commitment of time, money, and human resources has gone into implementing the new standards in our schools. We embraced the

framework of working as a professional learning community, revised our school calendar to provide the time needed for curriculum writing and creating common assessments, increased reading and math time in our middle school, and revamped our high school English Language Arts course offerings. We invested in professional development for our staff involving instructional strategies, assessment, and new materials. We asked our teachers to not only change the materials they were using but to also embrace new instructional practices and classroom management styles. We have already seen a dramatic increase in our local assessment scores. Our teachers feel confident in their abilities to bring about the necessary change that needs to happen with this reform initiative. To guarantee long-term success, school policies and practices – from professional development to the school master schedule to materials selection – must reflect the main effort of ensuring that each child is engaged, supported, and challenged to transition to this new level of expectations.

<http://standards.dpi.wi.gov/files/commoncore/pdf/osceola-sch-dist.pdf>.

Debra Zarling, MSE, PK-12 Reading Coordinator, Oshkosh Area School District:

- In my role as district Reading Coordinator, I have been involved in providing extensive professional development focused on these standards. I have worked directly with teachers to help them raise their expectations for themselves and their students. I have listened as teachers have told me “*My students can’t do that,*” and I have coached and supported them in helping their students achieve these new, more complex goals. I have seen their excitement and pride when their students excel and do achieve these new standards and, as a district, we are only starting to fully implement the **English Language Arts Standards** during the school year.

<http://commoncore.dpi.wi.gov/files/commoncore/pdf/oshkosh-schl-dist-testimony.pdf>.

JoAnn Sternke, Ed.D., Superintendent, Pewaukee School District

- In support of our mission to open the door to each child's future, we seek to make all Pewaukee School District students college- and career-ready. During this time, we have increased the percent of students attending a two- and four-year college from 70% to 93%. Embedded in our strategic plan is a deep commitment to personalizing the learning for all our students, making it more rigorous and relevant as we prepare students for a 21st century workplace. Our schools are recognized for innovating and transforming education, and we are doing so while seeing high levels of student achievement. I invite you to come and see the high quality, innovative education we are delivering in Pewaukee. When you visit, I am proud to say you will see the Common Core State Standards in action.
- Since Wisconsin educators, parents, community leaders and the public provided input into the development of the standards before the state adopted them in 2010, the Pewaukee School District has been aligning our curriculum to reflect these higher learning expectations at the core of the CCSS. We have aligned our Literacy and Math curriculum to the Common

Core State Standards, and we are seeing positive results. We have invested considerable resources and are seeing positive results in student achievement. Why would we want to deviate from this path of higher achievement? Isn't that what we all want?

<http://standards.dpi.wi.gov/files/commoncore/pdf/pewaukee-sch-dist-support.pdf>.

Jenny Gracyalny, Director of Learning Services, Pulaski Community School District:

- There have been comments recently made that Wisconsin can do better than the CCSS and should have more rigorous standards. PCSD educators would tell you that these are the most rigorous standards that they have encountered and that they have risen to the challenge of ensuring our students to be college, career and community ready.

<http://standards.dpi.wi.gov/files/commoncore/pdf/pulaski-community-sch-dist-testimony.pdf>.

Michael A. Johnson, Director of Academic Services, School District of River Falls:

- Our elementary students' reading and math achievement continues to climb as we implement the CCSS. In one elementary school, our poorest students are actually outperforming their peers in math; this can be attributed to our educators aligning instructional materials, assessments, and tailoring instruction to the CCSS. We have not changed the staffing levels or instructors, and the student cohort has remained constant – the CCSS is the variable.

<http://standards.dpi.wi.gov/files/commoncore/pdf/river-falls-sch-dist.pdf>.

A coalition of Sheboygan County school districts (Cedar Grove-Belgium, Elkhart Lake—Glenbeulah, Howards Grove, Kohler, Northern Ozaukee, Oostburg, Plymouth, Random Lake, Sheboygan Falls, Sheboygan):

- The CCSS are more rigorous than any of Wisconsin's previous standards. They continue to promote and expand upon creative and critical thinking skills essential for our children who will enter a global competitive workforce.

<http://standards.dpi.wi.gov/files/commoncore/pdf/sheboygan-county-schools-testimony.pdf>.

Lisa Quistorf, Curriculum Director, Two Rivers Public School District:

- I invite you to visit Two Rivers Public Schools to see our curriculum in action, observe our teachers collaboratively writing our curriculum using the Common Core State Standards as their guideline, or take a student assessment that is being used to evaluate our performance as a school. I guarantee you will observe our public schools implementing a high quality curriculum using the Common Core State Standards as our foundation.
- Despite this great increase in our economically disadvantaged population in our community each of our schools meets or exceeds state expectations. Koenig Elementary School has been named a Wisconsin Promise School for the last 10 years. Our teachers are outstanding in professional practice as educators. Our staff is dedicated to professional growth and implementing best practice in **how** we teach.

<http://commoncore.dpi.wi.gov/files/commoncore/pdf/two-rivers-schl-dist-testimony.pdf>.

Tim Schell, Director of Curriculum and Instruction for the Waunakee Community School District:

- The Common Core's emphasis on increasing disciplinary literacy and rigor across the subjects added wind to our sails and we are seeing the results in increased student achievement.

<http://commoncore.dpi.wi.gov/files/commoncore/pdf/waunakee-schl-dist-testimony.pdf>.

Judy K. Sargent, Ph.D., Director of Department of School Improvement, CESA 7

- Reports from educators have been illuminating. While being initially concerned about the increase in rigor, teachers are now reporting that students, even those with learning challenges, are reasoning more deeply, producing more complex work and showing pride in their new learning.

<http://standards.dpi.wi.gov/files/commoncore/pdf/cesa-7-support.pdf>.

Evidence from Other States that Common Core Implementation Has Positively Impacted Performance

Kevin Huffman, Tennessee State Education Commissioner:

- The state's academic growth cannot be tied directly to any one thing, but instead is a combination of a number of factors including the adoption of Common Core standards three years ago, Huffman said.

<http://www.timesfreepress.com/news/2013/nov/09/haslam-lauds-schools-gains/>.

Terry Holliday, Kentucky Commissioner of Education

- Having had the advantage of studying and implementing the Common Core almost two full years before the Common Core were assessed, we think that helped our kids get ready. But we're not going to see large increases in proficiency right away. For instance, if you're a 10th-grade student taking Algebra 2, the assessment you took this year was much more rigorous than anything that you've had before. It takes three or four years for the teachers and the kids to catch up.

<http://www.usnews.com/opinion/articles/2012/12/04/common-core-standards-early-results-from-kentucky-are-in>.

John King, New York State Education Commissioner

- Now, scores are in for Kentucky's second year of tougher assessments, and the indicators, for what they're worth, are grim: students there showed little improvement. Education officials expect New York students to experience similarly modest growth, if any, predicting that more dramatic improvements won't be seen for three to five years.

- “I was encouraged to see that Kentucky made incremental progress, and I would expect to see, over the next few years, incremental progress in New York,” State education commissioner John King said in a phone interview with Capital. “As schools and teachers move forward with implementation of the Common Core, I would expect, over time, educators will get more familiar with the standards, and they will get better at adapting their materials to the needs of their students.”

<http://www.capitalnewyork.com/article/politics/2013/10/8534385/what-new-york-learns-kentucky-about-common-core-education>.

State Deputy Superintendents of Education, Across the United States:

- All of the state survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that implementation of the Common Core will lead to improved skills among the state’s students in math (39 states) and ELA (40). Although states had the option of disagreeing with this statement or answering “not sure,” no state gave either of those responses.

<http://www.cep-dc.org/displayDocument.cfm?DocumentID=421>.

Teachers, Across the United States:

- Three-quarters (77 percent) of math and English language arts (ELA) teachers say the standards will have a positive impact on students’ ability to think critically and use reasoning skills, according to preliminary findings from *Primary Sources: America’s Teachers on Teaching in an Era of Change*, released by Scholastic and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

<http://all4ed.org/articles/primary-sources-three-quarters-of-teachers-believe-common-core-state-standards-will-have-a-positive-impact-on-students-critical-thinking-and-reasoning-skills-new-survey-finds/>.